

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Walker Bank Building

other name/site number Walker Center

2. Location

street name 175 S. Main Street ☐ not for publication

city or town Salt Lake City ☐ vicinity

state Utah code UT county Salt Lake code 035 zip code 84105

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this ☒ nomination ☐ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property ☒ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant ☐ nationally ☐ statewide ☒ locally. (☐ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title _____ Date _____

Utah Division of State History, Office of Historic Preservation
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. (☐ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title _____ Date _____

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

- ☐ entered in the National Register.
☐ See continuation sheet.
- ☐ determined eligible for the
National Register
☐ See continuation sheet.
- ☐ determined not eligible for the
National Register.
- ☐ removed from the National
Register.
- ☐ other, (explain:) _____

Walker Bank Building
Name of Property

Salt Lake City, Salt Lake County, Utah
City, County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(check as many boxes as apply)

- ☒ private
☐ public-local
☐ public-State
☐ public-Federal

Category of Property

(check only one box)

- ☒ building(s)
☐ district
☐ site
☐ structure
☐ object

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing

Noncontributing

1

buildings

sites

structures

objects

1

0

Total

Name of related multiple property listing

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Function

(Enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE/financial

COMMERCE/business

Current Function

(Enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE/business

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

LATE 19TH & EARLY 20TH CENTURY AMERICAN MOVEMENTS

Skyscraper

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation STONE: granite

walls STONE: granite

BRICK; TERRA COTTA

roof OTHER: Built Up

other TERRA COTTA

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

☒ See continuation sheet(s) for Section No. 7

Walker Bank Building
Name of Property

Salt Lake City, Salt Lake County, Utah
City, County and State

8. Description

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- ☒ **A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- ☐ **B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- ☒ **C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- ☐ **D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- ☐ **A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- ☐ **B** removed from its original location.
- ☐ **C** a birthplace or grave.
- ☐ **D** a cemetery.
- ☐ **E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- ☐ **F** a commemorative property.
- ☐ **G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

☒ See continuation sheet(s) for Section No. 8

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- ☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- ☐ previously listed in the National Register
- ☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register
- ☐ designated a National Historic Landmark
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Areas of Significance

(enter categories from instructions)

ECONOMICS

COMMERCE

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1911-1956

Significant Dates

1911, c.1931, c. 1939, 1947, c.1956

Significant Persons

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Eames & Young, Architects

James Stewart & Co., Contractor

Primary location of additional data:

- ☒ State Historic Preservation Office
- ☐ Other State agency
- ☐ Federal agency
- ☐ Local government
- ☐ University
- ☐ Other Name of repository: _____

☒ See continuation sheet(s) for Section No. 9

Walker Bank Building
Name of Property

Salt Lake City, Salt Lake County, Utah
City, County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 0.32 acre(s)

UTM References

(Place additional boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

A 1/2 / / / / / / / / / /
Zone Easting Northing

B / / / / / / / / / / /
Zone Easting Northing

C / / / / / / / / / / /
Zone Easting Northing

D / / / / / / / / / / /
Zone Easting Northing

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property.)

Beginning at SW corner Lot 4 Block 70 Plat A Salt Lake City Sur N 84 Ft. E 153.71 Ft S 89.9 Ft. W'LY 153.71 Ft. N 5.9 Ft to Beginning 5518-3014 5649-2445 6944-1252 7185-1092 9286-6392

Property Tax No. 1996 16-06-105-023-000

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

Determined by the lot which the building occupies.

☐ See continuation sheet(s) for Section No. 10

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Susan Petheram, Planner
organization Cooper Roberts Simonsen Associates date July 20, 2006
street & number 700 North 200 West telephone 801.355.5915
city or town Salt Lake City state UT zip code 84103

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs: Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional items: (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

name/title Vectra Management (contact person: Raju Shah)
street & number 424 West 33rd Street Suite 540 telephone 212.631.0202
city or town New York state NY zip code 10001

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reduction Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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Walker Bank Building, Salt Lake City, Salt Lake County, UT

Narrative Description

The Walker Center Building is a 16-story steel frame skyscraper of the three-part vertical block type. The exterior is clad in granite, terra cotta, and tan brick, and the foundation is granite. Above the 16th story is a three-story tower inset from the main tower, containing the elevator shaft, an observation platform that is 225 feet above sidewalk level, and the neon Walker Center sign. Construction on the building began in November of 1911 and was completed in 1912. Upon its completion, the building was the tallest in Salt Lake City. Located on Main Street, in the heart of downtown Salt Lake City, the building occupies the northeast corner lot of the Main Street and 200 South Street intersection. The principal façade fronts west onto Main Street, with the secondary façade facing south on 200 South Street. The base part of the building is rectangular in shape with the upper parts above the fifth story forming an "L" shape. Constructed for the Walker Brothers Bank, the building was known as the Walker Bank Building until 1981. The property is in good condition and retains much of its original detailing; the overall integrity of the building is strong. Situated in the urban core of Salt Lake City, it is surrounded by buildings that are both smaller and larger than it. While many surrounding buildings are from a more recent time period, there are also several structures that remain from the same time period or earlier.

A steel skeleton and concrete floors comprise the frame of the building. The exterior of the lower part of the building is clad in granite for the first two stories and terra cotta for the third story. The middle part of the building is eleven stories tall and clad in a tan-colored brick. The upper part of the building consists of two stories of terra cotta and the three-story tower covered in terra cotta and brick.¹

The principal façade of the building faces Main Street and is symmetrical in design. The windows on the ground story are storefront size. A metal canopy above the ground story wraps around the building, covering both of the street-facing facades. A c. 1956 remodel simplified the entrances giving the façade its current symmetry. The metal canopy was another addition from this remodel, which included work on both the interior and exterior of the building. A secondary entrance for the bank from the south was also removed at this time.² Originally, the first level of the principal façade was somewhat asymmetrical in detailing. The centrally located main entrance to the building was grand in design and detailing. The entrance to the bank was located one bay to the north and was accented with single-story fluted Doric columns. An entrance to the drug store located in the south corner of the building was simpler in design and located in the bay furthest to the south. The name of the building and the name of the bank were carved into the granite over their respective entrances.³ Prior changes to the storefront of the bank's Main Street entrance were made c. 1931, when the name of the bank was officially changed to Walker Bank and Trust Company. Historic photos show what appears to be a two-story metal storefront with fluted columns separating the two bays containing the bank's portion of the Main Street facade. This storefront was removed in the 1956 remodel. Bas-relief lion heads sit above the capitals of the columns for the corner bays, and the farthest east bay on the

¹ "Walker Structure Will Attain Lofty Heights." *Salt Lake Tribune*, October 15, 1911 and "Entrance Arrangement to Walker Building." *Salt Lake Tribune*, January 28, 1912.

² "A New Welcome From an Old Friend." *Walker Bank and Trust Company*. Brochure, 1958.

³ "Entrance Arrangement to Walker Building." *Salt Lake Tribune*, January 28, 1912 and *American Architect* 105, no. 1992, February 25, 1914.

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Walker Bank Building, Salt Lake City, Salt Lake County, UT

south façade. There were originally lions on the north bay of the west façade as well. It is assumed these were removed when the 1931 remodel added a storefront to this section of the façade. Simple detailing of round accent lights decorates the third floor of terra cotta. The 1931 remodel placed individual neon letters over the detailing on the third story to spell out Walker Bank on the west façade.⁴ Apparently, the detailing underneath was not removed, as it is present on the third story today.

On the east end of the building is a five-story section, visible from the south. The base part of the building was originally three stories; two additional stories were added to the east section c. 1939. The window placement on the third story and the upper parts of the building is symmetrical in design, with the center windows recessed, serving to accentuate the height of the building. The middle part of the building is very limited in decorative details. Terra cotta trims the outside sets of windows. The glass in the windows of the middle and upper parts of the building, most of which are double-hung, is slightly reflective, likely replaced with the last major exterior remodel c. 1956. Narrow belt courses of terra cotta, two beneath and two above the 14th story, serve to distinguish the middle part from the decorative upper part. Decorative corbels beneath the lower belt course and egg and dart molding beneath the upper belt course add a touch of detail to the middle section of the building.

The upper part, comprised of the top two stories and the recessed three-story tower, has the greatest quantity and variety of decorative enhancements. The decorative detailing of terra cotta is primarily vertically oriented, drawing the eye of the observer upward and further enhancing the height of the building. Two-story decorative panels separate each of the window bays, using a combination of flowers, leaves, and cherubs in the detailing. Slight differences in detail and width distinguish the outer panels from those in the middle. The upper cornice of the building projects out with a modest overhang, and is supported with wide heavily ornamented double scroll brackets. The detail on the brackets includes a vertical strip of fish scale and a center petal medallion. Between the brackets is a row of rounded segmented arches with cherub faces and floral detailing. Egg and dart detailing is repeated above the brackets and arches, running underneath the cornice and around the upper edges of the brackets. The outer edge of the cornice is further enhanced with a lion head medallion above each bracket. The cornice and the decorative panels wrap around the corners of the rear east and north elevations; however, apart from this these rear elevations are not ornamented with granite or terra cotta and are faced only with brick.

The three-story recessed tower is decorated in a manner similar to the top two stories. The decorative vertical panels are repeated on the bottom two stories, using the same design pattern as the center panels from the main building. Above each of these panels are two narrow brackets that support the observation platform. These brackets are similar in style to the brackets below the main cornice, but are decorated with a lion head and floral designs. Two rounded segmented arches are located between the middle two brackets, but do not have the decorative detail as those on the main building, containing only a raised rectangle. Additional detail below the observation platform includes egg and dart molding between the brackets but not out around their edges. Neon signs flank the

⁴ Photographic documentation, Shipler Commercial Photograph Collection, #39845 and #39846, Utah State Historical Society

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Walker Bank Building, Salt Lake City, Salt Lake County, UT

outside of the observation platform, with 8 foot individual neon letters spelling "Walker" and "Center" on alternating sides. The top story above the observation platform is decorated with wide decorative brackets, egg and dart, and a projecting cornice with lion heads above the brackets, in the same manner as the main cornice of the building. Above this cornice is a decorative balustrade around the perimeter of the three-story tower, with four stone eagles perched on the top of each side. A flag pole currently stands in the center of the roof atop the three-story tower.

The three-story tower has historically been used for the purpose of signage for the Walker Bank, going through three configurations prior to the current one. Each of the signs was illuminated.⁵ The first sign had Walker Bank in a single row of letters, affixed to each of the sides of the tower. The next sign for the bank, installed in the mid 1930s, had larger letters in two rows, with Walker being on top of Bank. Probably the most well known of the sign configurations came in the early 1950's. A 90-foot radio tower was erected in 1947 for use by the KDYL radio and television station, the first television station in Utah. After a few years the station moved the television transmitters, but the tower remained and on each of the three sides were hung letters to spell out Walker, while Bank was around the perimeter of the top of the building's three-story tower. It was this configuration that began the use of the sign as a weather beacon. The sign was blue for clear skies, flashing blue for cloudy skies, red for rain, and flashing red for snow. Visible from most parts of the valley, the flashing sign was seen by travelers as they drove into town. When the building was sold in 1983, the radio tower and the sign were removed. Soon after this, the current sign was erected to indicate the change in name of the building to the Walker Center. The sign was configured to continue the weather beacon tradition. With taller office buildings built around the Walker building, the sign is less visible and only from certain angles.⁶ The current owners are planning to rebuild the sign in the historic radio tower configuration, erecting a new 90-foot tower frame on which to affix individual neon letters spelling out "Walker" on the three sides. Individual letters spelling out "Center" will then be on all four sides of the building's tower. The proposed sign will continue the tradition of changing colors to indicate the weather forecast.

The interior of the building retains traces of its original character, although much of it has been renovated, the most extensive of which was the c. 1956 remodel of the entire ground floor and parts of other floors. A special pamphlet prepared by the bank in 1958 featured the changes. Other changes have been made to the upper office areas in the years since then, including removal of the center hallway on some floors to convert the area into a suite of offices. Original features that remain are a section of decorative plaster ceiling in the elevator lobby, a functional mail chute, some door hardware and marble treads on the stairs.

A parking garage with lower level retail space was constructed adjacent to the east side of the building in 1960. Although the architecture of the parking garage is of a different style, it does orient to the street; the nature of downtown massing is of buildings side by side, so the parking garage does not diminish the historic integrity of the building.

⁵ Photographic documentation, Utah State Historical Society Collection.

⁶ Walsh, Rebecca. "Walker Center Sign Keeper Keeps Eyes on the Sky." Salt Lake Tribune. January 4, 1998.

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Walker Bank Building, Salt Lake City, Salt Lake County, UT

The building is currently undergoing rehabilitation for federal tax credits. The majority of the proposed changes are to interior areas of the building – updating restrooms to bring them into compliance with ADA standards; upgrading the building systems; and remodeling the main entrance lobby to return it to a two-story entryway as it was historically. Other interior work includes remodeling the finishes on the first and sixth floors and in the elevators. The exterior work will include removal of the wrap-around canopy from the c. 1956 remodel and installation of a small canopy over the main entry only. Minimally invasive cleaning will be done on the exterior granite and terra cotta on the first three stories. In addition to the new sign mentioned previously, a new walkway will be constructed on the south side to connect the adjacent parking garage to the sixth floor of the building.

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Walker Bank Building, Salt Lake City, Salt Lake County, UT

Narrative Statement of Significance

Constructed in 1911-12 the Walker Bank Building is significant under Criteria A and C for its influence on the Salt Lake City banking community in the early 20th Century as well as being an excellent example of a three-part vertical block skyscraper designed in a Sullivan-esque style in downtown Salt Lake City. The building was designed with the most modern of amenities and innovations in building equipment and design. These included outside light for each office room, ice water taps on each floor, and four gearless traction elevators. The construction of such a large building in downtown Salt Lake City was a monument to the growth, progress, and modernization of the city following Utah's acceptance as a state. Investing in the building signified the faith the Walker Brothers Bank had in the future of the city. One of the tallest buildings in the West for its time, it stands as an example of the success and growth of the financial sector of Utah during the 1900-1910's. It was also one of the last building projects completed prior to the start of World War I, which put an effective halt on major construction projects in downtown Salt Lake City. Eames and Young, an architectural firm based in St. Louis, Missouri, designed the building for the bank. Both William S. Eames and Thomas Crane Young served as presidents of the St. Louis Chapter of the American Institute of Architects, in 1890 and 1909-10 respectively. Eames was also elected as National President of the Institute in 1904, the first from St. Louis to hold that office. They formed their partnership in 1885, which lasted until Eames' death in 1915. The firm achieved a national reputation, receiving good publicity for the duration of its existence and having their work featured and praised by professional journals such as *Architectural Record*.⁷ The building was designed with characteristics of Chicago School skyscrapers, containing the three parts of a classical column – the bottom floors functioning as the base, the middle stories as the shaft with little ornamental detail, and the top floors serving as the capital with a greater degree of ornamentation capped with a cornice. Stylistically, the building has hints of the Second Renaissance Revival, with its symmetry, accentuated belt courses, and modillions. It received national attention with a feature in the February 1914 issue of *American Architect*, as well as mention in the *New York Times*. The high-rise office building included several retail shop areas on the basement and ground floors, in addition to the bank's primary ground floor space. Retaining much of its original detailing and character, the building is in excellent condition and is a contributing historic resource in Salt Lake City.

⁷ *St. Louis Architects: Famous and Not So Famous, Part 3 & 10*, Carolyn Hewes Toft

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Walker Bank Building, Salt Lake City, Salt Lake County, UT

History of the Walker Brothers

The Walker brothers' influence on Salt Lake City began soon after their arrival in September 1852. There were four brothers, all born in Yeadon, Yorkshire, England: Samuel Sharp born September 22, 1835; Joseph Robinson born August 29, 1836; David Fredrick born April 19, 1838; and Matthew H born January 16, 1845. They, along with two sisters, immigrated to St. Louis, Missouri, with their parents, Matthew and Mercy Long Walker, in 1850. The father and two sisters died there from cholera in 1851. In April 1852, the four brothers and their mother decided to move on west to Salt Lake City.⁸

The Walker brothers engaged in various pursuits prior to organizing their dry goods store in 1859. The store, first located at Camp Floyd about fifty miles southwest of Salt Lake City, profited well from the troops, and after their departure, the stock was relocated to Salt Lake City and the Walker Brothers Dry Goods Company became well-established there.⁹ In conjunction with their dry goods store, the brothers engaged in banking, which was commonly connected to the general merchandising business in those days.

The eldest brother, Samuel S., married Fannie Bascom, January 5, 1857, and together they had ten children. He was active as a businessman until his death on September 10, 1887.¹⁰ Joseph R., married to Mary Ann Carson in 1859, had seven children. In addition to his involvement with the Walker Brothers Dry Goods Company and the Walker Brothers, Bankers, Joseph was also president of the Alice Gold & Silver Mining Company in Montana. After his death on January 6, 1901, his heirs sold their interest in the bank and acquired control of the Walker Brothers Dry Goods Company.¹¹ David Fredrick, a prime starter of the dry goods store, married his first wife Emeline Homes in 1859, and together they had seven children. Emeline died in 1876; in 1883, David married his second wife, Althea Hunt, with whom he had three children. In 1888, having sold his interest in the brothers' business, he moved to San Francisco and started business there. His death was September 12, 1910.¹²

The youngest brother, Matthew H., was married to Elizabeth Carson in 1865. They had two children. After Elizabeth's death in 1896, he was married a second time in 1897 to Angelina Andrews Hague, with whom he had a daughter. In addition to his banking and merchandising involvements, Matthew served on the Board of Education from 1898 to 1902. He died on July 29, 1916.¹³

History of Walker Bank

²¹ *Merchants and Miners in Utah*, Jonathan Bliss, pg. 275-7 and Inspector of Building's Register of Permits and Bills (Salt Lake City, November 1911)

²² *Merchants and Miners in Utah*, Jonathan Bliss, pg. 275

²³ *Ibid.*, pg. 279.

²⁴ Walker Brothers Bankers, Advertisements, *Salt Lake Tribune* January 21, 1912 and February 18, 1912.

²⁵ "The Wright Building, St. Louis, MO.," *Architects' and Builders' Magazine*, n.s., 9, no. 3 (December 1907): 113-116.

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Walker Bank Building, Salt Lake City, Salt Lake County, UT

The development of banking in Utah was united closely with the retail and merchandise business. The history of the Walker Brothers Bank, the first established in Utah Territory, is a good example of this union. At the time the brothers established their dry goods business in 1859, it was common for such stores to perform banking functions such as writing scrip, a local currency, in payment.¹⁴ The Walker brothers started a small store at Camp Floyd in 1859, serving the troops located there. They also bought and sold gold dust and had a safe in which customers could deposit money. A substantial profit was made there, allowing for a large purchase of surplus goods auctioned off when the camp closed in 1861, and the stock was moved to the store in Salt Lake City. Soon after this, a department of the store was opened specifically for banking purposes.

With its start in 1859, it was one of the first banks established in the west, although official bank status was not granted until 1871, according to tax records.¹⁵ In 1866, the northwest corner of 200 South and Main Street was purchased and the store and bank were moved there. In 1885, a national charter was obtained to operate as the Union National Bank of Salt Lake City. In 1886, David Fredrick sold out his interest in the firm to the other three brothers. After the death of Samuel S. in 1887, Joseph R. and Matthew H. surrendered the bank's national charter and began to operate as a partnership, Walker Brothers Bankers. In 1903, two years after the death of Joseph R., his heirs sold their interest in the bank to Matthew H. and he sold his share of the Walker Dry Goods Company to them. This marked the separation of the bank from the store, and Matthew H. incorporated the bank under the original name, Walker Brothers Bankers on January 21, 1903.

In April 1905, the bank purchased the Salt Lake branch of the Wells Fargo and Company Bank. In 1911, the bank established a savings department and expanded their bank-by-mail service through an advertising campaign. It was also in this year that the important decision was made to build a permanent and suitable building for the bank. The M.H. Walker Realty Company was formed to handle the financing of the building and keep it separate from the bank.¹⁶ After the death of Matthew H., the last of the four Walker brothers, in 1916, the bank changed personality as new people directed it toward the future.¹⁷

In March 1931, the name of the bank was changed to the Walker Bank & Trust Company to feature the importance of the Trust Department.¹⁸ In 1956, the bank was sold to Transamerica (later to become Western Bancorporation) for \$20 million.¹⁹ It continued under the Walker name until June 1, 1981, when the bank, and all others in the Western Bancorporation system, changed its name to coincide with the change of the corporation's name: First Interstate Bank. A new building for First Interstate Bank was constructed in 1983 – across the street from the Walker Bank building on the northwest corner of Main Street and 200 South, and the Walker Bank building was sold.²⁰ The current name of the building, the Walker Center, retains the connection to its beginnings with the Walker brothers and their bank, and the building itself is a physical representation signifying the important contributions of the Walker brothers to the banking and mercantile history of Utah.

²¹ *Merchants and Miners in Utah*, Jonathan Bliss, pg. 275-7 and Inspector of Building's Register of Permits and Bills (Salt Lake City, November 1911)

²² *Merchants and Miners in Utah*, Jonathan Bliss, pg. 275

²³ *Ibid.*, pg. 279.

²⁴ Walker Brothers Bankers, Advertisements, *Salt Lake Tribune* January 21, 1912 and February 18, 1912.

²⁵ "The Wright Building, St. Louis, MO.," *Architects' and Builders' Magazine*, n.s., 9, no. 3 (December 1907): 113-116.

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Walker Bank Building, Salt Lake City, Salt Lake County, UT

History of the Building

After inquiries were made concerning a number of architects, the firm of Eames and Young was chosen to be the designer of the Walker Bank Building. James Stewart and Co., a contracting company used previously by the architecture firm, constructed the building. Demolition of the existing one-story buildings located on the corner began on November 1, 1911, although the official building permit was not issued until November 25, 1911, according to records.²¹ The site was located across Main Street from the Walker Dry Goods building, which was on the northwest corner of the 200 South and Main Street intersection. Matthew H. and his wife Angelina owned the property chosen for the building, selling it to the M.H. Walker Realty Company when the decision to construct a new bank building was made. The Smith Drug Company, previously located on the corner lot where the new bank was being built, reopened in the corner space of the completed new building. The president of Smith Drug Company, Frank A. Druehl, was also a member of the Walker Bank board of directors.²² The building opened for business on December 9, 1912, as the tallest building in Salt Lake City and one of the tallest in the west.²³ Although it has been called the tallest building in the west for its time, some sources refer to it more accurately as the tallest building between the Missouri river and the Pacific Coast, as there were buildings in San Francisco and Seattle that were taller than the Walker Bank building.

The building is an excellent example of an early steel frame office skyscraper of the three-part vertical block typology of base, shaft, and capital. This type is typical of other high-rise buildings from the time period in the United States, and also similar to other buildings designed by Eames and Young.²⁴ Stylistically, the architects followed characteristics of Chicago School skyscrapers, approaching the building as a classical column in regards to placement of ornamentation and detail. The building is a great example of a skyscraper in Salt Lake City that uses the approach of the Chicago School and incorporates hints of the Second Renaissance Revival style. The Second Renaissance Revival style is apparent especially on the upper part where the greatest degree of ornamentation is placed. The top two stories and recessed three-story tower are designed with symmetry, accentuated belt courses, arches, and modillions that support a wide cornice. Flowers, leaves, cherubs, and lions are used in the details, many of which are vertically oriented to accentuate the height of the building. When it opened for business, it was equipped with a bank of four gearless traction elevators, ice water on every floor, marble wainscoting on every corridor and outdoor light for each office.²⁵ The use of granite, light colored masonry and details such as the lion sculptures were common for the time of the building.

The lower, storefront part of the building has gone through two major changes in its history. The first was c. 1931, when a new metal storefront was added over the exterior granite of the bank's entrance in the north bays of the Main Street façade. The bank underwent a name change in 1931 to become

²¹ *Merchants and Miners in Utah*, Jonathan Bliss, pg. 275-7 and Inspector of Building's Register of Permits and Bills (Salt Lake City, November 1911)

²² *Merchants and Miners in Utah*, Jonathan Bliss, pg. 275

²³ *Ibid.*, pg. 279.

²⁴ Walker Brothers Bankers, Advertisements, *Salt Lake Tribune* January 21, 1912 and February 18, 1912.

²⁵ "The Wright Building, St. Louis, MO.," *Architects' and Builders' Magazine*, n.s., 9, no. 3 (December 1907): 113-116.

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Walker Bank Building, Salt Lake City, Salt Lake County, UT

the Walker Bank & Trust Company, and the façade was added showcasing the new name of the institution. This metal storefront was removed when the building underwent its last façade change in c. 1956. This remodel altered the main entrance to the building, removing the two-story classical details surrounding the entry doors and adding a metal canopy above the ground floor that wrapped around both the Main Street and 200 South facades. This metal canopy currently remains in place, and has had minor alterations done to reflect the change in the building's name to the Walker Center, c. 1983.

The middle and upper parts of the building remain the same stylistically, except for replacement of the windows with a slightly reflective glass. The recessed three-story tower, historically used for signage purposes, has undergone changes only in the configuration of the sign. Currently, 8 foot individual neon letters spell out "Walker" and "Center" on alternating sides. Originally, letters spelling out "Walker Bank" in a single row were placed on each of the four sides. Around c. 1935, this was switched to a large sign, with the "Walker" being above the "Bank", again on each of the four sides. The next sign change came when a local television station, which had used the roof for a transmitter tower, moved their transmitters but not the radio tower. The bank took advantage of the tower for use as a sign holder, wiring individual letters spelling out "Walker" on the three sides of the radio tower; letters spelling out "Bank" were placed around the sides of the three-story tower. This sign was well known in the community as a weather beacon, as it changed the color of its lights to reflect weather forecasts – blue for fair skies; flashing blue for clouds; red for rain; and flashing red for snow. This radio sign tower, the longest running configuration, remained in place for nearly 30 years, until the building was sold in 1983, its use as a bank ended, and its name was changed to the Walker Center.

The Walker Bank building, easily identified by its recessed three-story tower atop the building, is one of the few remaining early 20th century skyscraper buildings left in downtown Salt Lake City. Along with the original First Security Bank building at 67 South Main, the Continental Bank building (now Hotel Monaco) located diagonally across from the Walker building, and the Boston and Newhouse buildings located in the Exchange Place Historic District, the Walker Bank building is an important representation of the growth and progress of downtown Salt Lake City in the early part of the 20th century, when many improvements were made to downtown such as paving of the streets and the population of the city was growing dramatically.

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Walker Bank Building, Salt Lake City, Salt Lake County, UT

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Walker Bank Building, Salt Lake City, Salt Lake County, UT

Common Label Information:

1. Walker Bank Building
2. Salt Lake City, Salt Lake County, Utah
3. Photographer: Susan Petheram
4. Date: 5/4/2006
5. Digital copy on file at Utah SHPO.

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Section No. PHOTOS Page 2

Walker Bank Building, Salt Lake City, Salt Lake County, UT

Photo No. 1:

6. North and West elevations of building. Camera facing southeast.



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Section No. PHOTOS Page 3

Walker Bank Building, Salt Lake City, Salt Lake County, UT

Photo No. 2:

6. South and East elevation of building. Camera facing northwest.



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Section No. PHOTOS Page 4

Walker Bank Building, Salt Lake City, Salt Lake County, UT

Photo No. 3:

6. East elevation of building. Camera facing southwest.



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Section No. PHOTOS Page 5

Walker Bank Building, Salt Lake City, Salt Lake County, UT

Photo No. 4:

6. Main Entrance and Canopy. Camera facing southeast.



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Section No. PHOTOS Page 6

Walker Bank Building, Salt Lake City, Salt Lake County, UT

Photo No. 5:

6. West and South elevations of building. Camera facing northeast.



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Section No. PHOTOS Page 7

Walker Bank Building, Salt Lake City, Salt Lake County, UT

Photo No. 6:

6. Tower Detail. Camera facing northwest.



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Section No. PHOTOS Page 8

Walker Bank Building, Salt Lake City, Salt Lake County, UT

Photo No. 7:

6. Detail of upper stories. Camera facing west.

